

Further Observations

ON THE

BUYERS OR RECEIVERS

OF

STOLEN GOODS,

PARTICULARLY

OF LEAD, IRON, COPPER, BRASS, BELL-
METAL, and SOLDER.

WITH

Some EXTRACTS from Mr. FIELDING's Enquiry.

By a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year MDCCLVI.

Further Observations

ON THE

BUYERS OF RECHIVERS

OF

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HEAD, AND SOLID

WITH

Excerpt from Mr. F. Lewis's Inquiry

A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

LONDON:

Printed by the Year MDCCCLVI



Further Observations, &c.

IN a Letter, addressed to a Member of Parliament, dated *London, December 31, 1750.* and published immediately after; having taken Notice of the Inefficacy of the Laws in being to prevent the pernicious Practices of stealing, and buying and receiving of stolen Goods, particularly of Lead, Iron, &c. and therein endeavoured to point out the Reasons of such Inefficacy, and proposed a Law in being (*viz.* the Act of the Fifteenth of *Charles* the second, Chap. 2. intituled, *An Act for the Punishment of unlawful cutting, or stealing, Spoiling of Wood and Underwood, and Destroyers of young Timber Trees*) as a Precedent, humbly conceived proper to be followed; and offered Reasons why a Law, founded upon such a Plan, is more likely to obtain the desired Effect, and pretty fully transcribed the

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same:

same: It is (a) observed, that a new and more effectual Law became absolutely necessary; and (b), that it would be proper, in such Law, to point out explicitly particular Circumstances to be observed by the Buyers, that might oblige them to make strict Enquiry in whom the Property is, of the Goods offered to Sale. And having therein endeavoured to obviate such Objections as might be made to the Plan proposed, and (c) taken Notice of the Discoveries made of enormous Thefts committed on the River *Thames*, with the astonishing Combination between the Thieves and Receivers, to the great Loss and Injury, not only of many eminent, honest, and fair Traders, but, as was justly apprehended, to the public Revenue also; I proceed now to make such further Observations as have occurred since the Publication of that Letter, as additional Arguments of the Expediency of such a Law.

Upon the Discovery of the before-mentioned Thefts, a large Subscription was made by the Merchants of *London*, and others, to the Amount of 1100*l.* and upwards, for carrying on Prosecutions against the Offenders. And although the Spirit for bringing to Justice such a notorious Nest of Thieves and Receivers, as were then combined together, was remarkably great and commendable; and

(a) Page 27.
& 32.

(b) Page 28, & 29.

(c) Page

though many were then impeached or informed against, and several prosecuted, yet, from the Danger which attended the Apprehending, the Difficulties of convicting, Delay of Trials, and the Necessity of making some of them Evidence, this Subscription does not appear to have answered the End proposed by it so fully as could have been wished, as but few of the Receivers (the chief Cause and Support of the Evil) were convicted, in Proportion to the Expence and Number informed against; and several, both Thieves and Receivers, have escaped, or not been brought to Justice; who, though obliged to abscond for a Time, may probably have returned, and fallen into their former Courses, that Fund being exhausted which was raised for their Prosecutions: And notwithstanding this large Subscription, many Individuals have been put to great Charge, who besides that, and the Loss of their Time, have even run the Risque of their Lives. A remarkable Instance of this Kind having fallen within my own Knowledge, I think it not amiss to relate some Particulars of it, and to give a Copy of the Information taken on that Occasion, as from thence may be shewn (in a strong and striking Light) the strict Connexion betwixt the Thief and the Receiver, and the great Inconveniencies and Discouragement the civil Officer is subject to in the legal Discharge of his Duty.

This Person being in the Office of High Constable, and willing to discharge his Duty with Zeal and Diligence, in the Night-time, about Twelve or One a Clock, apprehended Two suspicious Persons with Bundles on their Heads; in which, upon Search, he found several Pieces of a broken Bell; and was afterwards obliged (on the Discovery made by One of them) to prosecute Three Thieves and Two Receivers; the Consequence was (besides the Loss of his Time, and the Hazard of his Life), he was put to the actual Expence of Sixty-four Pounds, and upwards, and charged with a Bill of Seventy-four Pounds more.

Here follows a Copy of the Information which is divided into Two Parts, the better to shew the distinct Offences of each Receiver. And it may be proper to observe, that *John Pearson*, to whom the First Part of the Information relates, was convicted, and transported for Fourteen Years; and that — the other Receiver, not being tried in the Lifetime of *Garret* the Evidence (who was kept in Goal about Ten Months), was in course discharged without Trial,

*Copy of that Part of the Information
relating to Pearson; taken the 23d of
August, 1750.*

‘ Kent, } **T**HIS Informant *Robert Gar-*
‘ To wit, } *ret*, of the Parish of *Saint*
‘ *Paul, Deptford*, in the said County, La-
‘ bourer, maketh Oath, That he has known,
‘ and for several Years been acquainted with,
‘ one *Thomas Mathews*; and that, about
‘ *Christmass* last, he became more intimately
‘ acquainted with him: And then the said
‘ *Thomas Mathews* took an Opportunity,
‘ when they were together, to tell this In-
‘ formant, that he believed he wanted a little
‘ Money as well as himself; and that, if the
‘ Informant had a Mind to engage, he could
‘ tell him of a Copper that was easily to be
‘ carried away; and that he knew a Man that
‘ would buy it of them, with whom he had
‘ had Dealings before. That the said *Tho-*
‘ *mas Matthews*, almost every time he met
‘ this Informant afterwards, persuaded him to
‘ be concerned in the taking away the said
‘ Copper; till at length this Informant was
‘ prevailed on by him, and promised to be
‘ concerned in the stealing the said Copper;
‘ and that one *Adam Lumsdall*, who was also
‘ present at the same time, agreed to be con-
‘ cerned in it likewise. And accordingly
‘ this Informant, and the said *Adam Lums-*
‘ *dall*,

' dall, went to a Place called *the Upper Wa-*
 ' *ter Gate*, in the Parish of *Saint Nicholas*
 ' *Deptford*, between Nine and Ten a Clock
 ' at Night, some time in the Month of Fe-
 ' *bruary* last (the said *Thomas Matthews*
 ' going out before them in order to prepare
 ' Boat); and about Twelve a Clock they a-
 ' Three got into the Boat at the *Upper Water*
 ' *Gate* aforesaid, and rowed from thence to
 ' the *Lower Moorings* against the *Lower*
 ' *Water Gate*, in the said Parish of *Saint*
 ' *Nicholas, Deptford*, and County of *Kent*
 ' and then the said *Thomas Matthews* and
 ' *Adam Lumsdall* got out of the Boat into
 ' Ship which lay there at Moorings (this In-
 ' formant continuing in the Boat), and le-
 ' down a square Copper, with an Iron Bar
 ' thereon, out of the said Ship into the Bo-
 ' and then they rowed back to the *Upper*
 ' *Water Gate* with the Copper, and there they
 ' landed it; and from thence carried it to
 ' one *John Pearson's* House, who lives in
 ' *King Street*, in *Saint Nicholas, Deptford*
 ' aforesaid, but a small Distance from the
 ' Water Side. That they went in at a Back
 ' Door, which was only upon the Latch, and
 ' which, the said *Thomas Matthews* informed
 ' this Deponent, was left so on Purpose that
 ' the Copper might be the more conveniently
 ' brought in; and that they left the Copper
 ' in a Shed in the Yard belonging to the
 ' Dwelling

Dwelling-house of the said *John Pearson*, wherein he keeps his Rags, and then went away; and about Six o' Clock in the Morning the said *Thomas Mathews* and *Adam Lumsdall* (as they informed this Deponent) went to the said *Pearson's* House again, who paid them Two Guineas and Two Shillings, in Part of what he was to give for the Copper, as they also informed this Deponent. And this Deponent further saith, that between Six and Seven o' Clock the following Night, they all Three went down together to the said *Pearson's*, and there he paid them One Guinea more; and at the same time *Pearson* told this Informant, that he had paid the other Two; viz. *Mathews* and *Lumsdall*, Two Pounds Four Shillings in the Morning; and then the said *Mathews* pulled out Two Guineas and Two Shillings, which, with the Guinea he paid last, was equally divided between all Three of them, in *Pearson's* Parlour, and in his Presence; and at the same time *Pearson* sent out for a Dram for them. And this Informant further saith, that about Nine o' Clock the same Morning that the said *Mathews* and *Lumsdall* received the Two Guineas and Two Shillings, as aforesaid, this Deponent went down to the said *Pearson's* House to enquire after the Money, and found that the said *Mathews* and *Lumsdall* had been there before

' fore him; and then the said *Pearson* asked
 ' this Informant, from whence they had got
 ' the said Copper? Who told him (viz. *Pearson*)
 ' *son*), that they had stolen it from out a Ship
 ' at the *Lower Water Gate*; at which he
 ' smiled, but said nothing. And this Informant
 ' further saith, that when they were all
 ' Three together at *Pearson's*, at the time he
 ' paid them the last Guinea (as before-men-
 ' tioned), the said *Pearson* informed them
 ' that he had not then got one Piece of the
 ' Copper in the House, for that he had cut
 ' up, and sent it all away. And this Depon-
 ' ent further saith, that the said Copper,
 ' this Deponent believes, weighed upwards
 ' a Hundred Weight; but he knows not
 ' whose Property it was. And further the
 ' Deponent saith, that some time after the
 ' Informant, and the said *Adam Lumsdall*
 ' went to the said *Pearson's* House, where they
 ' saw him, and told him, that they were going
 ' out to see if they could get a Copper,
 ' Sails, or something else for him; and told
 ' him to leave the Back-Door on the Late
 ' that they might the more readily get into the
 ' Yard what they should happen to bring; and
 ' that he promised them, he would leave the
 ' Door on the Latch according to their Re-
 ' quest: And about an Hour afterwards, the
 ' Deponent, the said *Thomas Mathews*, and
 ' *Adam Lumsdall*, went out together in a

' Boat

Boat from *Deptford* to *Greenwich*, where this Informant went on Board a Cutter, then lying off *Greenwich Hospital*, in the Parish of *East Greenwich*, in the said County of *Kent*, and stole thereout Three or Four Sails, and put them into the Boat where *Mathews* and *Lumsdall* were, who received them; and then they all Three came back to the *Upper Water Gate*, at *Deptford* aforesaid, and from thence carried the said Sails into the said *Pearson's* Yard, by the Back Way, about Eleven o' Clock at Night, the Door being left on the Latch according to his Promise: And next Morning they all Three, at *Pearson's* Request, carried the said Sails into his Garret; and that the said *Pearson* gave them One Guinea for the same, which was equally divided between them; but this Deponent knows not whose Property they were. And this Informant further saith, some little time after, they all Three went to the said *Pearson's* one Afternoon, and told him to leave the Back-Door upon the Latch, for that they were going to steal a Copper from the other Side of the Water; and he promised to leave the Door on the Latch, according to their Request: And about Eleven o' Clock at Night this Informant, the said *Mathews*, and *Lumsdall*, went together in a Boat from a Place called *George Stairs*, in *Grove Street*, *Deptford*, to a Yard called the *Lime Kiln Yard*, at or near *Limehouse*

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' Hole,

' *Hole*, in the Parish of *Saint Ann*, *Lime*
 ' *house*, in the County of *Middlesex*, and be-
 ' longing to one *Mr. Graves*, as this Depo-
 ' nent has been lately informed; and there
 ' they all Three went ashore, and stole out of
 ' the said Yard a Copper Kettle, used for boiling
 ' Pitch, &c. which was then half-full of Rosin
 ' and that they brought the same to the *Upper*
 ' *Water Gate* aforesaid, and from thence the
 ' carried it by the Back Way, as before-men-
 ' tioned, to the said *Pearson's* (the Back-Door
 ' being left on the Latch as *Pearson* had pro-
 ' mised), and put it into his Rag Shed, be-
 ' tween Twelve and One o' Clock: And then
 ' they immediately went all Three to steal a
 ' Bell (which they had fixed their Mind on for
 ' above a Week before) out of a Ship then
 ' lying on the Ways, and adjoining to *Mr.*
 ' *Buxton's* Dock Yard, in the said Parish of
 ' *Saint Nicholas*, *Deptford*, and County of
 ' *Kent*, and there this Informant and *Lund*
 ' *dall* went into the Ship, and stole the Bell
 ' and handed it to *Mathews*, who continued
 ' in the Boat; and then they brought the
 ' same away, and left it in *Pearson's* Shed, with
 ' the Copper they had just before stolen,
 ' being now about Two a Clock in the Morning.
 ' And about Two Days afterwards the
 ' all Three went to the said *Pearson's*, where
 ' weighed the said last-mentioned Copper and
 ' Bell in his Back Room; the Copper weigh-
 ' ing about Fifty-six Pounds, for which he paid
 ' the

them Twenty-eight Shillings, being after the
 Rate of Six Pence *per* Pound; and for the
 Bell they received Seventeen Shillings and
 Four Pence, being after the Rate of Four
 Pence *per* Pound; but this Informant does
 not exactly remember the Weight of the
 Bell, but thinks it was about Fifty-two
 Pounds Weight; which Money was all
 equally divided between them. And further
 this Informant saith, that some time after
 this Informant, the said *Mathews*, and
Lumsdall, went to *Pearson's*, and gave him
 Notice to leave his Door on the Latch again,
 for that they were going to steal a Ship's Bell;
 and accordingly they all Three went to the
 Great Wet Dock, in the Parish of *Saint Mary*
Rotherhithe, in the County of *Surry*, and
 between Eleven and Twelve o' Clock at
 Night, this Informant and *Lumsdall* got
 over the Wall, and left *Mathews* on the
 Outside to watch; that they then went on
 board a *New England* built Ship in the
 Dock, called the *Duke of Bedford*, and
 stole thereout the Bell belonging to the said
 Ship, and carried the same, as before, to the
 said *Pearson's*, which they put into his Rag
 Shed; and the next Day they all Three went
 to *Pearson's*, who weighed the said Bell, and
 gave them Thirty-seven Shillings for it, being
 after the Rate of Four Pence *per* Pound:
 And at this Time the said *Pearson* told them,
 that hereafter they should break the Bells,

‘ and not bring them whole ; for that, when
 ‘ they were broke, they might be carried in a
 ‘ Bag in a snugger and safer Manner, and not
 ‘ be so liable to Suspicion as when whole.
 ‘ And then the said *Pearson* told them, he
 ‘ would learn them how to break the Bells,
 ‘ and accordingly he took them all down into
 ‘ the Cellar, and stuffed some Rags into the
 ‘ Bell to damp the Sound ; and then with a
 ‘ Maul struck the Bell on the Inside of the
 ‘ Rim, which broke it into Pieces. And after
 ‘ this, this Informant being ill, and not caring
 ‘ to go out on Nights, left off these Practices
 ‘ for about Two Months ; and then, grow-
 ‘ ing better, this Informant took on again.
 ‘ And then this Deponent, the said *Mathews*
 ‘ and *Lumsdall*, went to the said *Pearson*,
 ‘ and told him to leave the Back-Door on the
 ‘ Latch, as usual, for that they were going to
 ‘ steal a Bell. He told them, that they should
 ‘ take care, and break it as he had shewed
 ‘ them. They then replied, that they had no
 ‘ thing to break it with : And thereupon
 ‘ *Pearson* told them, he would lend them a
 ‘ Maul for that Purpose : And about Ten
 ‘ o’Clock at Night this Informant went to the
 ‘ said *Pearson*’s House, and *Pearson* lent him
 ‘ a Maul, as he had promised ; and also gave
 ‘ him some Rags to put into the Bell to pre-
 ‘ vent the Sound of it when they broke it.
 ‘ And about Twelve o’Clock at Night the said
 ‘ *Mathews*, *Lumsdall*, and this Informant
 ‘ went

went to Mr. *Elias Bird's* Dock Yard, in the said Parish of *Saint Mary, Rotherithe*, and County of *Surry*, and stole a Bell from out a Ship lying in the Dry Dock in the said Yard, which they carried to *Pearson's*, as usual, and put it into the Rag Shed, for which *Pearson* paid them the next Day: But this Informant cannot remember the exact Sum. And this Informant further saith, that, about a Fortnight before they stole the last Bell, the said *Pearson* told this Informant, *Mathews*, and *Lumsdall*, being then altogether at *Pearson's* House, that he could help them to a good Chance, if they could but get it off: And then he informed them, that there was a large Copper, with Two Rooms in it, lying in a Yard on the Left-Hand Side of the Street as you go to *London*; and, the better to describe the Yard to them, he told them it was next adjoining to a Public House, called the *Warren Galley*, to the best of this Informant's Remembrance. And soon after this Intelligence, the said *Mathews*, *Lumsdall*, and this Informant, went to view the Copper in the Day-time, to see if they thought they could bring it away without further Assistance; and, after such View, they resolved to try at it: And accordingly, Two or Three Nights afterwards, they all Three went to the said Yard (which this Deponent has been informed did belong to one Mr. *Greville* and

' and Company, and lies in the Parish
 ' of *Saint Mary, Rotherhithe*, aforesaid
 ' and, after Trial, they found it too heavy
 ' for them Three only to carry off; so that
 ' they were obliged to desist for the present
 ' Upon which *Mathews* said, that he could
 ' get his Landlord to assist them; and accordingly,
 ' about a Fortnight afterwards, the said
 ' *Mathews, Lumsdall*, this Deponent, and
 ' one *Thomas Walter* (the said *Mathews*
 ' Landlord, and who then kept a little House
 ' on *Greenwich Road*, near to the Tanner
 ' Yard there), went to the said Mr. *Greville*
 ' and Company's Yard after Twelve o'Clock
 ' at Night on a *Sunday*, and stole from thence
 ' the said Copper, which *Pearson* had in-
 ' formed them of, as before-mentioned
 ' *Lumsdall* being obliged to break open the
 ' Yard Gate before they could get it out. From
 ' thence they carried it to their Boat, which
 ' they had left at *Globe Stairs*; and from thence
 ' to the *Upper Water Gate*, at *Deptford* aforesaid;
 ' and from thence, by the Back Water
 ' aforesaid, to *Person's Back-Gate*, which was
 ' left upon the Latch as usual; but the Copper
 ' being very large and heavy, and the Door
 ' Way, as they thought, scarce wide enough
 ' to receive it, this Informant went into
 ' *Pearson's Back Yard*, and called him to go
 ' up and help them in with it, which he accordingly
 ' did; and, after much ado, they at length
 ' got it into *Pearson's Yard*, and ended

voured to get it into his Cellar, but could not, the Copper being too large; so that they were obliged to take it, for the present, into his Wash-house, where the said *Pearson* cut it asunder, having first stuffed it with Rags to prevent its ringing; and, after it was so cut, they carried it into the Cellar, where the said *Mathews*, *Lumsdall*, and this Deponent, assisted *Pearson* the greatest Part of the next Day, being *Monday*, in cutting it into small Pieces; and then the said *Pearson* weighed all the Pieces (except the Two Cocks) which belonged to the said Copper, and gave them Eight Pounds One Shilling for the same, which was equally divided between all the Four; *Mathews* taking upon him to receive *Thomas Walter*, his Landlord's, Part: And *Pearson* told them, that he should be busy that Night, being *Monday*, in getting it off; but, if they would come the next, being *Tuesday*, that they would have a Drink together. But this Informant heard before in the Afternoon, that one of the Cocks of the Copper was found at *Pearson's*; and that he was gone off on that Account. This Informant went to *Pearson's* House accordingly, and found that he was gone off, as he had been told: But this Deponent saith, that he hath seen *Pearson* since, who told this Informant, that, when the Constable searched his House for the last Copper, he was obliged to hide himself up
the

' the Chimney to prevent being taken. And
 ' this Informant further saith, that, after they
 ' had stolen the Sails out of the Cutter oppo-
 ' site to *Greenwich Hospital*, as has been be-
 ' fore set forth, this Informant, *Mathews*, and
 ' *Lumsdall*, stole a Gib and Main-sail out of
 ' a small Vessel then lying aground above the
 ' *Lower Water Gate*, in *Saint Nicholas*
 ' *Deptford*, aforesaid, which this Deponent
 ' has since been informed belonged to one *Je-*
 ' *nathan Oliver*, which they carried away to
 ' *Pearson's*, as before-mentioned; but, not
 ' having given him any Notice of it, the Door
 ' was not left on the Latch, as it usually used
 ' to be; so that they were obliged to throw
 ' them over the Wall, and put them into the
 ' Rag Shed: And in the Morning he gave
 ' them Seven Shillings and Six Pence in Part
 ' of Payment, and promised to give them
 ' some more; and then they assisted him to
 ' get them up into his Garret.

Copy of that Part of the Information
relating to ———; taken the 23d of
August, 1750.

' And the Deponent further saith, that
 ' sometime after this (i. e. *after stealing the*
 ' *large Copper from Mr. Greville and Co's Yard*
 ' *as before-mentioned*) said *Mathews*, *Lum-*
 ' *dall*, and this Deponent, went to *M*
 ' *West's Yard*, in the Parish of *Saint Nicholas*
 ' *Deptford*, aforesaid, in the said County
 ' of *Kent*, where this Informant and *Lum-*

dall stole the Bell belonging to the Yard, whilst *Mathews* kept Watch: And *Pearson* being now obliged to abscond, on account of the last Copper, they carried this Bell, which they stole from Mr. *West's* Yard, as aforesaid, to one ——— (whom *Mathews* had before been with to speak to him about buying the Bell, as he informed this Deponent, and whom *Mathews* told this Informant that he had dealt with before for Things in this Way), and put it into the said ———'s Yard; and then, it being about Twelve o'Clock at Night, *Mathews* rapp'd at the said ———'s Chamber-Window, whilst this Informant and *Lumsdall* kept off at a small Distance, who immediately came down, as *Mathews* informed this Deponent, and paid him for it Eleven Shillings and Six Pence. And this Deponent further saith, that the next Day this Informant and *Lumsdall* went to the said ——— and asked him if *Mathews* had not been there the Night before with a Bell? to which he replied, that he had. They then asked him if he wanted any more things of that Sort; he answered, as many as they would bring; but that he would not give any more than Two Pence Halfpeny or Three Pence a Pound for them: And told them, at the same time, if they could bring him any Copper or Iron, it would do for him as well. Accordingly this Informant, *Mathews*, and *Lumsdall*,

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' went

' went out that Night, and stole Two sma
 ' Anchors from off the *Red House Wha*
 ' (which this Informant believes to be th
 ' Property of one *William Perkins*), situate
 ' *Saint Paul, Deptford*, in the said County
 ' *Kent*; and One small Anchor from o
 ' board a Lighter lying above the *Red Hou*
 ' and carried all the Three Anchors to the sa
 ' ———'s after One o'Clock, who receiv
 ' them into his Dwelling-house, and weigh
 ' them, and paid for them immediately; b
 ' the exact Sum this Informant cannot remem
 ' ber: That the said ——— asked them,
 ' the same time, where they got them? an
 ' said, he hoped that they did not get the
 ' near his Home; pointing towards, and me
 ' tioning, some Smith's Shop near ———
 ' ———; to which he was answered
 ' No: But that they had stolen Two of the
 ' from the *Red House Wharf*, and One
 ' them from out of a Lighter, as before-me
 ' mentioned; at which he appeared very w
 ' satisfied. And this Informant further said
 ' that they acquainted him, at the same tim
 ' that they knew where to steal a little Copp
 ' which was set in an Iron Hearth, but cou
 ' not conveniently get it away without som
 ' Instrument of Force; upon which the sa
 ' ——— promised, and accordingly did, t
 ' next Day, make them an Iron Crow for th
 ' Purpose; and at Night the said *Lumsd*
 ' and this Informant went on board a *Virgin*
 ' Shi

Ship, then lying off *Limehouse Bridge Dock*, in the Parish of *Saint Ann, Limehouse*, aforesaid, and stole out of the said Ship, between Eleven and Twelve o'Clock at Night, a small Copper; which, by the help of the Crow, they forced away, and put it on board their Boat, where *Mathews* kept whilst they were stealing it; and from thence they all Three brought it to the said ———'s about One o'Clock, and put it down into his Cellar; and that he gave them Twenty-three Shillings for it the next Morning: But enquired of them when they brought it, from whence they had got it? and they then told him, that they had stolen it in Manner as before set forth. And this Deponant further saith, that, about Six Weeks ago, to the Best of his Remembrance, this Informant and *Lumsdall* told the said ——— that they could get another Copper for him; to which he told them, to call him up when they brought it; for he was always ready for them. Accordingly, the same Night, this Informant and *Lumsdall* went on board the *Royal Duke*, an *East-India* Ship, then lying in Mr. *Well's* wet Dock, in the Parish of *St. Paul, Deptford*, aforesaid, in the said County of *Kent*, and stole thereout a Copper Pitch-Kettle, which hung up in the Fore-castle, which they also carried to ———'s about One or Two o'Clock, who, upon rapping at his Window, got up and took the Copper into

' his Dwelling-house; and the next Morning
 ' they went to see it weighed, and found
 ' cut into small Pieces, which he weighed, and
 ' said it amounted to 47 lb. for which he gave
 ' them Twenty-three Shillings and Six Pence
 ' And this Informant further saith, that, about
 ' a Month ago, this Informant and *Lumsdall*
 ' went to the said Mr. *West's* Yard, in *Saint Nicholas*,
 ' *Deptford*, aforesaid, and stole from
 ' out of a Ship, which had come from *Jamaica*,
 ' and then lay in the Dry Dock there
 ' the Bell belonging to the said Ship; but,
 ' they were upon the Water, with the Bell
 ' their Boat, being pursued by some Custom
 ' house Officers, and afraid of being taken,
 ' they were obliged to throw the Bell over
 ' board, to prevent a Discovery. And this De
 ' ponent further saith, that, on *Tuesday* Night
 ' last, this Informant and *Lumsdall* went
 ' *Limehouse Bridge* Dock Yard, in the Parish
 ' of *Saint Ann, Limehouse*, aforesaid, and
 ' went on board a Ship lying at the Head
 ' of the Dock, and stole thereout the Bell be
 ' longing to the said Ship, which they brought
 ' away in a Boat, and landed it at a private
 ' Stairs near the *Dog and Duck*, and afterwards
 ' carried it into the Fields, where they
 ' concealed it in a Ditch; and last Night
 ' about Eleven or Twelve o'Clock, they brought
 ' the said Bell into Pieces in the Field; Part
 ' which they put into a Bag, which *Lumsdall*
 ' carried, and the other Part they put into

Pair of Trowfers of *Lumsdall's*, which this Informant carried. And this Deponent saith, that, between Twelve and One o'Clock last Night, as they were carrying the said Bell so broken into Pieces, as aforesaid, they were stopped by the Constables of *Deptford*, who opened the Bag and Trowfers; and upon finding the Pieces of Bell, as aforesaid, apprehended and secured this Informant and the said *Lumsdall*. And this Deponent further saith, that the said *Mathews* and *Lumsdall* usually went out in the Day-time to see if they could fix on any thing to carry away in the Night; and then used to come to this Informant generally and acquaint him with it. And this Deponent saith, that he never was concerned or engaged in any other Felony or Robbery, with any Person or Persons whatsoever, than what is before set forth.

As from hence the Buyers and Receivers of stolen Goods plainly appear, and are also universally acknowledged to be, the principal Cause of the Commission of Felonies, and as they are so secured from Punishment by the various Difficulties attending their Conviction, as the Law now stands; it seems necessary to try if, by any other Means, this great and increasing Evil can be remedied.

At present the Buyers and Receivers are only to be punished on Conviction of buying or receiving,

ceiving, KNOWING THE GOODS TO BE STOLEN the Difficulties of which has been mentioned before.

Now if the Receivers were made original Offenders, and punishable (in the same Manner as, and independent of the Conviction of the Thief) for buying or receiving stolen Goods, when under strong Circumstances of Suspicion, they would, of course, become more cautious, and make such Enquiries as every honest Man ought to do.

And if the Discovery of the Receiver, as well as that of the Thief, was rendered more practicable, and the Conviction easy (in a summary Way), and the Punishment made more moderate, there is great Reason to believe such a Law would much better answer the desired End; as it would be not only more convenient and less expensive to the Person robbed, but probably be productive of great Good to the Public; being the more likely Means to redress the Evil, and reform the Criminal; who may be thereby saved from Ruin, and perhaps rendered a future useful Member of Society.

Before I quit this Subject, I must beg Leave to mention one thing more, to shew the Necessity of the Law proposed. — It is the notorious Practice of pilfering by Labourers in general, and often by Journeymen employed by the Master Tradesmen in the Building-Business, more particularly in and about *London*, to the great Injury either of the Owners of the Buildings

ings, or of the Master Workmen, when new Buildings are erecting, or old ones repairing, altering, or pulling down, which (without the Master's constant Presence) it is absolutely impossible for them to prevent.

This indeed, as it is most remarkably prevailing, so it is most difficult to prevent, in the Plumber's Trade; Lead and Solder (from the Ease wherewith the Form may be changed, and thereby the Identity of them rendered impossible to be proved) being with the greatest Safety disposed of.

As to the Fact of pilfering by the Labourers and Journeymen, every Gentleman may know, by Enquiry of the Master Workmen he employs. Nay! this infamous Practice, by long and successful Use, is become so prevailing, and some of the Journeymen (it is said) have been so impudent, that, when the Master Plumbers were in want of Hands (notwithstanding the great Wages offered), they have had the Assurance to demand the Cuttings and Scraps of Lead as a Perquisite.

And as to Buyers and Receivers of Goods in this Kind, it is notorious that there are many Shopkeepers, who, in a clandestine Manner, without Scruple, buy all that is brought; and that in such Quantities as to become wholesale Dealers, offering to serve Plumbers with Lead and Solder, both in Town and Country, under the real Value.

The most reputable Part of the Master Workmen

Workmen (particularly the Plumbers) desire a Remedy, and with Reason; as thereby the Property of each Master, as well as that of the Gentleman, will be better secured, and the present great Disreputation the Plumber Trade in general labours under, will be removed.

I have been the more particular in this, well to shew the Inveteracy of the Evil, as to point out to Gentlemen of Fortune, who are more largely concerned in Building, the Rapine they are almost unavoidably exposed to.

From the Consideration of this stubborn Mischief, and the various Kinds of Felonies from Ships and Wharfs, mentioned in the preceding Information, the Necessity and Utility of extending the Law proposed to the Particulars of Lead, Iron, Copper, Brass, Bell metal, and Solder, will, I think, be sufficiently evident.

The late ingenious Mr. *Fielding*, in his *Enquiry into the Causes and Increase of Robberies &c.* printed in the Year 1751. makes the following Observations, which, as they seem applicable to my present Purpose, I have here subjoined.

Sect. V. *Of the Punishment of Receivers of Stolen Goods.*

He says (a), ' One great Encouragement to Theft of all Kinds is, the Ease and Safety

(a) Page 68.

with which stolen Goods may be disposed of.—It is a very old and vulgar, but a very true Saying, that if there were no Receivers there would be no Thieves. Indeed, could not the Thief find a Market for his Goods, there would be an absolute End of several Kinds of Theft, such as Shop-lifting, Burglary, &c. the Objects of which are generally Goods, and not Money.—Nay, Robberies on the Highway would so seldom answer the Purpose of the Adventurer, that very few would think it worth their while to risque so much with such small Expectations; but, at present, instead of meeting with any such Discouragement, the Thief disposes of his Goods with almost as much Safety as the honestest Tradesman.

For he afterwards says, in Page 69. ' Among the great Number of Brokers and Pawn-brokers, several are to be found, who are always ready to receive a Gold Watch at an easy Rate, and where no Questions are asked, or, at least, where no Answer is expected, but such as the Thief can very readily make. Beside the clandestine Dealers this Way, who satisfy their Consciences with telling a ragged Fellow or Wench, that they hope they came honestly by Silver, and Gold, and Diamonds; there are others, who scorn such pitiful Subterfuges, who engage openly with the Thieves, and who have Warehouses filled with stolen Goods only.'

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He further adds in Page 70. ' What the
 ' shall we say? Is not this Mischief worthy of
 ' some Remedy? or is it not capable of it
 ' The noble Duke (*i. e.* the late Duke of Rich-
 ' mond, one of the worthiest of Magistrates
 ' as well as of the best of Men) thought other-
 ' wise; as would have appeared, had his val-
 ' able Life, for the Good of Mankind, been
 ' prolonged. Certain it is, that the Law,
 ' as it now stands, is ineffectual to cure the Evil.
 And in Page 73. ' The principal Defect
 ' seems (says he) to lie in the extreme Diffi-
 ' culty of convicting the Offender: For, in
 ' those Cases where the Thief can be taken, you are not
 ' at Liberty to prosecute for the Misdemeanour.
 And in Page 74. ' 2dly, The Thief himself
 ' who must be convicted before the Accessaries
 ' can be tried, cannot be a Witness.—With-
 ' out such Evidence, it is very difficult to con-
 ' vict, of the Knowledge that the Goods were
 ' stolen; which, in this Case, can appear from
 ' Circumstances only: Such are principally
 ' 1st, Buying Goods of Value of Persons very
 ' unlikely to be the lawful Proprietors. 2dly,
 ' Buying them for much less than their Value.
 ' 3dly, Buying them, or selling them again
 ' in a clandestine Manner, concealing them
 ' &c. None of these are commonly liable to
 ' be proved: And (says he) I have known a
 ' Man acquitted where most of these Circum-
 ' stances have appeared against him. What
 ' then is to be done to extirpate this stubborn
 ' Mischief?

Mischief? To prove the pernicious Consequence of which, I need, I think, only appeal to the Sense of Parliament, testified in so many repeated Acts, and very strongly expressed in their Preambles.'

He proceeds a little further, and then says, 'Is it impossible to find any Means of regulating Brokers and Pawnbrokers?' Then he asks, 'Why should not the receiving stolen Goods, knowing them to be stolen, be made an original Offence;' and observes, 'that by this means the Thief (who is often a paltry Offender, in comparison of the Receiver, and sometimes his Pupil) might, in little Felonies, be made a Witness against him; for thus the Trial of the Receiver would in no Case depend on the Trial or Conviction of the Thief:' And proposes, 'that the Defendant (or Buyer) should prove, by a credible Witness to the Transaction, that he had good Cause to regard the Seller or Pawner of the Goods to be the real Owner.'

He concludes this Section with saying, 'If none of these Methods be thought possible, or proper, I hope better will be found out: Something ought to be done to put an End to the present Practice, of which I see daily the most pernicious Consequences; many of the younger Thieves appearing plainly to be taught, encouraged, and employed, by the Receivers.'

Sect.

Sect. VI. *Of Laws relating to Vagabonds.*

Having first observed (b), that 'The other great Encouragement to Robbery, beside the certain Means of finding a Market for the Booty, is the Probability of escaping Punishment:' He adds, 'That the Robber hath great Hopes of being undiscovered; and this is one principal Reason why Robberies are more frequent in this Town, and in its Neighbourhood, than in the remoter Parts of the Kingdom.'

Sect. VIII. *Of the Difficulties attending Prosecutions.*

He has the following Words (c), 'I now come to a Fourth Encouragement which greatly holds up the Spirits of Robbers, and which they often find to afford no deceitful Consolation; and this is drawn from the Remissness of Prosecutors:' Which he then particularly enumerates.

Sect. IX. *Of the Trial and Conviction of Felons.*

He observes (d), 'That if, notwithstanding all the Rubs which we have seen to lie in the Way, the Indictment is found, and the Thief

(b) Page 75. (c) Page 106. (d) Page 111.

' brought

brought to his Trial, still he hath sufficient Hopes of escaping, either from the Caution of the Prosecutor's Evidence, or from the Hardiness of his own.' And then, to the end of this Section, particularly describes, and largely reasons upon, the many Difficulties attending Convictions.



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to his Trial, till he had sufficient
evidence, either from the Canton
Prothonotary, or from the
Court of his own. And then to the
Court on particularly described, and
one more, the many Difficulties at



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